

**Group Oral History Interview About the UND-EB Fire of January 9, 1970**  
**Conducted by Mrs. Ylitalo**

The following text is from a 28-page typed transcription of an extended, multi-party interview with individuals who were present at the fire and who participated in the immediate response. “Mrs. Ylitalo” is Ruth Ylitalo of Frederick, SD, a former student at the school. Many persons participated in this interview, but the transcript does not identify the names of all of them. Blank spaces indicate an unknown speaker.

The earlier part of the interview discusses many of the main details of the fire. As the interview proceeds, emphasis shifts toward interpretation of the fire; what it meant for the students at the time, and what the fire experience revealed about their connection to the school and the campus.

For other historic documents about the Ellendale area, browse the collection at <https://archive.org/details/@cliosmith> To contact museum curator Ken Smith about this or other materials, please email [colemanmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:colemanmuseum@gmail.com)

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DENNIS DAHL: My name is Dennis Dahl, I’m head resident over at the new men’s dorm, originally from Steven, Minnesota. I’m a sophomore this year. I became aware of the fire about 4:45 or thereabouts. I was normally getting up at 5:00. I heard some noise outside and saw the flames shooting up over the top of the building, so I got dressed at once and went over to talk to the head of the fire department about the fire and offered my assistance and he said, after awhile, “just grab a hose and relieve some of these guys.”

I was standing and went over and talked to Mr. Randall and suggested that we try and get a hold of a boom from Montana Dakota Utilities to get on top of the building to squirt water on it. He agreed to the idea to get uptown with one of the fellows who works for MDU and he put an extension on the truck and a small bucket and came back. By that time all Carnegie was in flame and the flames were starting to jump on top of the education building. It was too late to save that any more so we backed the truck around south of the education building in front of the Armory and I got in the boom of the truck about a quarter of six or thereabouts and I went up and they gave me a hose. I was up there for about an hour and a half or so.

MRS. YLITALO: How cold was this?

I froze my feet up to my knees—that’s because one time the flames came out of the dean’s office, it got pretty hot and I waved at them to drop me about 20 feet or so and they dropped me too fast and my hands were all wet you know from the hose—and I couldn’t hang onto it and it squicked me with water. The sun was just starting to come up. It must have been about 6:40 or 7:30 or thereabouts and they let me down. The flames were starting to subside and another fellow said he would take over so I could get some coffee. So I did and when I came back the truck was gone already. The flames had died down now and then I started with the hoses and the foam with the rest of the firemen on the bottom floor around the safe trying to cool the safe down just hoping that the paper and stuff would be alright.

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They kept on spraying water on it and they put a foam covering with a chemical reaction and it was about 9:30, I believe, when they finally started rolling up the hoses and everybody left.

DOUG CORNELIUS: I'm Doug Cornelius, originally from New Effington, South Dakota and [I'm in] my third semester at Ellendale, a sophomore and student body president. I heard a noise outside my door, and it was pandemonium in the halls. People were yelling that the place was on fire over there. And the first thing I noticed when I looked out was Dennis helping the firemen. My roommate and I quickly got dressed and ran over and by that time the water was being sprayed, etc. We were just standing around kind of confused and the fire chief, I think it was Mr. Graham, asked us to help with files.

So we went into Mr. Andresen's office and there was a number of us. Mr. Andresen was in there I remember. He was just kind of strange; he was almost in shock but he really kept us cool. I know I never could have under the pressure. There were four files weighing about 500 pounds apiece, I suppose, and there were three to four guys on each file we took out and set them on the ice and pushed them down the street out of the way. The fire was just smoldering upstairs, I mean in my estimation, really, we didn't realize the consequences that were about to develop.

I'm sure that other things could have been saved also but we were told to move out because you never knew when the ceiling was going to come down on us and then after the other buildings started to be in danger there was all kinds of student help. I was really impressed, the kids were helping in every way possible, manning hoses, opening fire hydrants, moving ladders for firemen, moved the school cars out of the garage. I remember standing by Mr. Newman when they could see that the whole complex was going to be lost and he said it was just like losing an old friend—he was almost in tears and I know a lot of the other faculty and administration were much the same.

MRS. YLITALO: [to Jerry Maley] Now don't be bashful.

JERRY MALEY: I was about twenty minutes after four when I heard the siren blowing and I wasn't sure what it was because I was sleeping. I laid there and I opened my window up and I looked across to the school. I could see the flames and the police car driving up the driveway by the school so I jumped up and threw my clothes on and ran out in the hall and there was nobody up. I didn't know how bad the fire was or what was happening because I was half asleep. Then I went back in and got dressed warm because I knew I was going to go outside.

When I got down to the second floor there was another group of boys who went with me. We went out to the fire. By this time the fire truck was there and they were running the hoses out so we grabbed hold of them and helped them string them out. I saw that the fire was on one end of the building and I knew the music department was on the other end so I thought something could be saved out of there.

I went up to the door to open it up, and someone told me not to open it, as the draft might cause the fire to just further carry on. I asked them about taking the fire escape up one side, and they thought this would be no good either because they couldn't trust it, it was so old. There wasn't much we could do but just stand there. The fire chief suggested we go around the east side of the

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building where they would need some help to carry our valuables, and this is when we went back there and drug the files out of the dean's office. When we got about the last file out, the smoke had dropped down on top so we couldn't see anymore. I could hardly breathe. I just left and went around the other side again to help another man with a hose.

MRS. YLITALO: I don't think I mentioned your name.

JERRY MALEY: I Am Jerry Maley from Verona, North Dakota.

DONALD AUCLAIR: I'm Donald Auclair, from Ashley, North Dakota. I'm a second semester sophomore and Commander of the Vest's club on campus. I live right on the campus—in fact in student housing—one of the few families still living there. I didn't hear the fire alarm. First, I heard the police siren on duty instead the policeman on duty went around the houses with the siren on hoping to wake somebody up, so I didn't pay too much attention to it. I thought maybe the policeman was chasing somebody. Then all of a sudden, I heard the fire alarm and that's when I got up myself and looked out and saw a lot of smoke coming from the area right behind the school.

I was behind the building and I couldn't see the school itself but I wasn't too sure so I opened my door and about that time I could hear some trucks coming up. So I got dressed in a hurry and went around the building. When I got around there someone was hollering to help with files and stuff. So we went in and Mr. Andresen unlocked his door and we got his files, four big ones. Then after we came down with that, Mr. Groth wanted to go up and get some of his records. It was pretty heavy with smoke up there, but it wasn't so bad so that we couldn't breathe or anything.

When we came down from that, we saw Mr. Steinwand coming out with a desk with somebody that was helping him. I then went back in the building and yelled if anyone else needed some help. Nobody from the education department answered, but somebody did answer at Carnegie and some other fellow. I don't know who they were, of course. But there was a lot of commotion and you don't notice who is around so we went down through the passageway and I could hear the wood cracking overhead as we went through the hallways and Mr. Hobbs was just leaving his room. He had everything he could carry, and he wanted to get out of the building. We did too. It was burning pretty good at that time. When we got out of the building somebody yelled that we better go wake up Tom Maier and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Pomplun who lived back there and my wife and children go get ready just in case they had to evacuate. I got back around to the school. From about 4:30, when I saw the fire, until about 5:30 to 6:00, about 1 ½ to 2 hours to my estimation, the building was completely gutted out. That's about all I can say on it.

JAMES REDLIN: I'm James Redlin from Ellendale. I was home when the fire whistle blew, and I didn't hear it. I was sleeping and I never hear the whistle, but my mother and dad heard it and they told me to get up because the college was on fire. They could just see the flames so I thought I would go up and see what was going on. So I had my pickup truck and drove up behind the fieldhouse there. And I walked up and I met Art and Frenchy and they were carrying things out, so I helped carry things out of the business office and the education department and carried some drawers and stuff. I was kind of at the end of the door. They would hand it to me and I

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would run out and set it on the ground and run back and grab something else. The last time I ran up there the fire was burning pretty good and the hot ashes were getting pretty bad to be running in and out, so I ran in to get them and I didn't hear anybody. They were up in the business office getting Mr. Steinwand's desk. We pushed that out, and after we got outside they decided we wouldn't go in anymore because it was getting too bad in there. Then I went and got my pickup and put the files and stuff in it and drove it around the side of the dorm.

My name is Arthur Dunn. I live on campus and my home is out in the country. I woke up and I thought it was about 10 to 4 or 10 after when I heard the fire alarm go off. I thought it wasn't really a fire as the whistle only blew three times. But when I kept on going I thought something must be really wrong, so I got up. Otherwise I wouldn't have got up if I had just thought it was a fire (yes it was). I got up and walked down the hallway and saw some kids looking out the window and I noticed there was just a little flame in Carnegie at the time so I went over to offer my assistance.

After I got over there, I started rolling our hoses. The fire trucks had just pulled up when Jerry Maley and myself got over there and pulled out the hoses. Mr. Graham told us Mr. Andresen was on the other side of the building and he wanted somebody to help him carry out some files. A bunch of us guys took them over and carried out files and it was starting to burn pretty good then, but they thought they would get it out. And then Mr. Steinwand came in and I and Jim Redlin came over and we helped him take out this desk. I bet that weighed 500 pounds just between the three of us. It was getting real smoky, and you could see the water dripping down the side of the walls and through the floor and things. And there was somebody down at the other end of the hall so we ran down there and Mr. Hobbs came out of his room with some stuff and he said we should leave. So we left and went outside.

After this the armory was getting hot and we figured the armory would go. We thought if the armory would go then the fieldhouse would go and we got over to the fieldhouse. Mr. Steinwand and myself and Mr. Wickre were over there. We started picking up things—basketball uniforms, wrestling uniforms and stuff—just in case it would spread over there. After we got this packed we went outside to see how bad the fire was and it had already burned just about all of the two main buildings and it looked pretty bad for the armory but we just stood around and hoped I wouldn't catch the armory on fire because if the armory would have gone then the fieldhouse would have gone and that would have been the end of the school. That's what we thought so we took and put snow on the armory so it wouldn't catch on fire.

MRS. YLITALO: I'm interested in how you put snow on the armory. Did you put it on the roof?

ART DUNN: No, that was on the cafeteria that was beginning to get real hot. The siding was starting to buckle and the cafeteria is located just adjacent to the east and northeast end of Carnegie. And they were kind of afraid of that catching because the flames were so intense and the heat radiated so. It just melted this path. You could see it had melted water back ½ block away from the building. I was standing in the kitchen in the cafeteria watching later on and the windows would crack from the heat while we were standing there—right in front of your face. It got really hot when it caught on that biology lab. The explosion blew the wall out.

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MRS. YLITALO: The explosion from the chemistry lab?

ART DUNN: There was also an explosion in the chemistry lab I noticed when I was standing there. This gigantic black smoke that rolled out of there, from some highly flammable chemical or something, but I think it is pretty well walled on the side of the chemistry that would be causing external damage. I think by the time the heat reached the bottom floors it was so intense that the stuff burned instantly because I was standing in front at the time I was after a wrench for one of the hydrants.

I remember looking in the main door and the steps going up both flights were just exactly as they would have been two weeks ago, but every single part of it was in flames. Amazing how everything was on fire but yet in place. It remained that way for about two minutes and then it was gone. I remember one classroom upstairs was really odd—it would be the northwest English room where we have our comp and everything. That room didn't burn when the downstairs floors had fallen out. And above it the music room was burned and all around it was burned. I suppose it was so tightly sealed or something and that just exploded when it caught that room. It hadn't burned at all, and then it burned. And I remember the pianos coming through. Three to four pianos at once came down and shattered when they hit.

DENNIS DAHL: That was the same as I mentioned earlier about the Dean's window. It burned fast up to the Dean's office, [and] when it hit there everything seemed to stop for a minute. I was above it and evidently it came around his office. The doors must have all been closed. And pretty soon the windows started to get black and you could see the heat. You could see a little fire on either side and you could see the windows pop, flames going up a full story. It burned real intensively for about twenty minutes. Things were falling through the office.

ART DUNN: It was kind of a weird feeling the last time I walked in there I was looking for those guys because it was getting bad. And I walked in the Dean's office and I can still see it with the adding machine and stuff sitting on the desk and it looked like someone was still in there, you know. And there wasn't anyone in there and then I walked down and helped move stuff out and then before we went out I must have been about the last one out and I kind of looked around and before I shut the door it was kind of like when you close the coffin on somebody or something. That was really a sad thing. You just kind of look and that was it—you shut the door and that's the last you ever see of it.

DON AUCLAIR: My wife won't even look at the brick building, what's left of it. She doesn't go to school here but she has been living on the campus here for over a year and it means a lot to her too. She won't look at the building at all. She says it makes her sick just thinking about it.

MRS. YLITALO: I had a strange thing happen that morning. I'm afraid I have a little of this extra sensory perception that you read about. I don't usually talk about it but I do get a feeling that something is going to happen and I woke about four o'clock and I got up and made a cup of tea, read the paper, went back to bed and couldn't sleep. And our fire alarm at Frederick blew about six and they were calling these other towns to help and I just knew something terrible was going on. We were just leaving the house and I have a prescription for tranquilizers which I sometimes take in the evening when I think I'm not going to be able to sleep. And I have never

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taken one in the morning, and I was just going out the door—my husband was driving me to work—and I said “wait a minute” and I went in and took a tranquilizer. He said “what are you doing that for?” and I said “I don’t know, I just need one.” And then when we came up from Frederick we could see it.

\_\_\_\_\_: We were talking, my roommate and I, after this all happened and everything, he said he had dreamt that Carnegie had burned up. And you know, he didn’t want to say anything because he thought maybe if he had said something before the fire they would think that he had burned it down, you know. Well, you know, you always heard somebody saying you wish that hole would burn down so you wouldn’t have to go to school.

I tried to wake two guys up. I told them to come on, the school’s on fire. And, of course, they thought I was kidding, you know, go away, I want to sleep, I’m tired. You know, that’s what I thought, it was a big joke right away. I heard the siren, and somebody said Carnegie was burning and some guy says, “get out of here, I want to go back to sleep.” I was walking around talking to people while the fire was going on. They would look at each other and say, “well, I guess it is all over.” This is the end of it and everybody was just ready to pack up and leave, you know.

Within two hours after Mr. Andresen had talked, after they had thought twice, the people who were the most strongly in favor of saying “well, let’s give it up,” now they are with the “we can work it out” movement. Mr. Andresen said they were going to stockpile all the bricks and they are going to ask alumni to buy a brick, you know, whatever they can contribute. He doesn’t know whether the records are safe.

DENNIS DAHL: When all this was happening, it was happening very fast, and I didn’t really realize what happened until I was aware the building burned down, and that was a shame and it was certainly something the school didn’t need. It wasn’t until a couple nights afterwards that I drove by in my car. The sky was clear, and it was a real nice evening, and everything was a shambles. And it was just smoldering. And that is when I realized what had happened, how it really was. Everything was just strewn all over the place. Fire was just creeping out of the bricks. It was just real eerie. You know, it was just like a dream being that early in the morning, you know. Like you just got to bed, you wished it was just a dream, I tell myself.

GREG REDLIN: I couldn’t believe this when just Thursday night I had been working in Hobbs’ office until about 12 o’clock. We were about the last ones out of Carnegie, and we had become quite close to the building as far as everything in there goes, and then four hours later the fire whistle kept blowing and blowing. And I live in Ellendale. I just couldn’t believe what was happening. It was about a 15-minute fire whistle and I heard my mom get up and looked to the north and didn’t see anything and I looked west and didn’t see anything and I looked east and I saw flames leaping out of the sky. I just couldn’t believe what was happening. You didn’t know from where I was situated if it was the library—I knew it was on the campus. I got over there and then as it was burning, of course, I helped out with different things. You just don’t realize what is happening until it is all over, because maybe more things could have been saved. You know how human lives get crowded when everything happens like this, and [that] might have been good.

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\_\_\_\_\_: The same thing happened to me because after the fire I just kind of said to myself, “What if you lose a few, you don’t have to sweep the floor tomorrow.” Take it really easy, just like coming off a basketball game and we lost the game. Sunday it really hit me when I walked over here and looked and thought about the destruction. And I have just been tight ever since. I just couldn’t imagine the loss. I suppose we won’t feel it for another 2-3 weeks, really, what happened.

\_\_\_\_\_: One thing that really made me feel good was when Mr. Andresen called that meeting right away in the cafeteria at 9 o’clock. He came in there with such a good attitude, you know, the heads up—we aren’t going to die—everything is a go, you know, just as if nothing happened. Just what he said gave me something, because I was kind of down in the dumps about it too. I mean, there goes most of the school and the building where I spent all my time—well, I thought, there’s nothing here for me. And the way he gave his speech and the way he talked and the way the students just sort of perked up really made me feel a lot better. Like Doug said, in a couple hours all those who were down about it were just ready to hang it up and quit—they are the ones that are ready to go.

\_\_\_\_\_: The thing that I admired of Mr. Andresen the most was, some of the kids were saying “I suppose I’ll never see you again” and were feeling bad about it; some didn’t know what they were going to do; they were all planning on going home Friday night. I went over and talked to the Dean and one of the kids says, “when are we going to have school again?” And he says, “Monday morning.” I don’t know, right there it gave me a good feeling when he said that, and we accepted that. I don’t know it was about the wisest decision of the whole thing. It’s just human nature to try and get out of work, of course, but I think it was a great thing we did have it today because to keep right on going, to keep it moving, is the most important thing.

DENNIS DAHL: I was also a little surprised at the attitude, of course, as Kirk said it is human nature, but I think it was a little more than that percentage that should have reacted. The people were standing there watching it burn and watching their years of work going down the drain and saying “well you know, we are really lucky that nobody was killed and we are really lucky that there was nobody even scratched, rather than being concerned for themselves and their own welfare—I lost this typewriter and a briefcase—they were just thankful that nothing more serious transpired.

After it was all over, I am sure everyone was a little sorry for their personal losses. But first came the attitude of the public and the student body. They said, “well what are the students going to do, you know, who are most likely without their transcripts?” We found out later that they were saved. But at the time everything was uncertain and yet there was a feeling of unity in the student body. And, as Mr. Andresen stated, this student body does have something different about it. I never have gone to another school, but I don’t think I will find another one like this. It is small but I think that is more to its advantage than disadvantage.

MRS. YLATALO: I went to a larger school. I went here two years and transferred to Ames, Iowa. I think there were about 600 students at N.I. as we called it then, and there were something over 6,000 at Ames. And this has always been my college and that is way back before the Spanish-American War, you might say.

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\_\_\_\_\_: Students came back who transferred out even last year and prior to that. I don't know how they feel about their school but I've never heard a comment against it. After moving away, they say that they like this; it had a much better atmosphere; the others were too cold. Mr. Andresen has received letters from students saying this will always be their home. This happened over homecoming—a number of our students transferred up to Valley City last year—we got quite a reaction from them concerning their spirit and where they thought their homecoming should be. They called Valley the Ellendale Branch up there.

\_\_\_\_\_: I even heard some of the students that transferred say that if they would change this school back to a 4-year college, next year they would transfer back down here again because it is home to them.

\_\_\_\_\_: I've heard that from so many students I know.

MRS. YLITALO: I was going to say I had a crazy experience down there. I was majoring in chemistry and one prerequisite was that you have a year of calculus before you could take this chem but they only gave it every two years. So I got special permission to take the two at the same time. And it was a pretty bitter experience, so I didn't take the final exam. I came back to Ellendale and Mr. Demer was here in the chemistry department and I told him about my problem, and I said I can come back in the fall and they will let me take that final exam if you will help me. And so, all that summer Mr. Demer helped me, so I really had a grasp of well, what we call pre-chem. It's nuclear chemistry they call it now, and I got a "C," which isn't good, but without Mr. Demer in there I wouldn't even have gotten credit for it.

DOUG CORNELIUS: Thinking about different persons now—my roommate is a freshman, while he is a transfer student it is his first year here, I know we were over there right away and the flames were just barely seen in the windows upstairs—I don't know if the windows were broke yet, and I said, "Tim, your drums are up there." He's a drummer for a dance band and he has over \$900 worth of drums and I said, "let's go get your drums" and he right away said "no let's go get those records." Let's go for the school you know, and I remember he was sliding a filing cabinet down the street while he was watching his drums fall through the roof upstairs."

\_\_\_\_\_: Speaking of drums, we were standing down on the ground watching up on the third floor where that music department was located, and we could see through the window that big concert drum burning. And it was just like a ring you see in the circus that lions jump through—the bass drum all lit up in flames. The brass horn, it would take a lot to burn that and that was just standing there on a stand just all red hot. I was just watching it. You could just see as the fire spread from window to window, you can just imagine if you were acquainted with the area up there; you could just about imagine what was going next, you know, you could see the flames creeping across the carpet in the band room, taking everything with them. I noticed when as it got to the second floor I was watching the labs, you could see the fire go as it crept on top of the second floor and it went underneath the door and you could see it creeping along the top of the ceiling and as it lit up the whole lab you could see that thing just reflecting. It was some kind of feeling just watching it and then . . .



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\_\_\_\_\_: Well, when we were in there getting records and stuff everything was kind of neat because it was just normal downstairs. Well, I didn't notice the smoke at first. You did but you got in there it was just normal, like when you go to school everything was just in its place. But you could hear a little crackling upstairs and the start of water creeping down the walls, you know.

DENNIS DAHL: It seemed like the general attitude was like the calm before the storm. I think what Jim was referring to and I say it too as I watched the flames enter the Dean's office and ignite the chair and the table where in the conference room anticipating a storm or hurricane or tornado or whatever the case, you can see it coming and everything is quiet and you know what is going to happen. And I think the feeling there, and everybody that watched it, knew what was going to happen. And they knew what it meant for the students and they knew what it meant for the school. And I think that is why they reacted the way they did.

\_\_\_\_\_: You forget about yourself, and I know I did. I think everybody in this room stood by to help.

DOUG CORNELIUS: I thought when one of the janitors ran for the keys for the car, it just, to my mind, [made me think] "student, power." Guys walked in and pushed those cold cars out, you know, two to three guys pushing those cars out. We went over to the maintenance building and they moved out the big snowplow and the small rotary tractor was there, and they were looking for the keys and talk about student power—six guys went in and carried it out. You know that is really student power.

JIM REDLIN: They just moved everything out. they carried out air conditioners—a 100 lb. air conditioner and everyone had a hold of it. Art and I and Mr. Steinwand kind of grabbed that desk and slid it and hit the wall and here is all this nice plaster kind of banged.

DENNIS DAHL: Something like when I was handling those big hoses, they were strapped to my back, and I had never ran a hose before. I didn't realize until afterwards how strong they were—they didn't bother me at the time when I first opened it up—I had never even ran a hose before and when I got down on the ground after I had been over and had coffee and I pulled hose back and it just slid me on my can—right in the water, you know. I couldn't even hang on to it. There had to be two of us—another guy behind me. I don't think I was aware of what was happening, and I don't think anyone else was, either.

\_\_\_\_\_: Like I was saying, when the fire was upstairs and we were in the education building carrying out those files, we didn't realize the place was really going to go. You know, when we ripped them out of the wall, I felt kind of bad that we ruined the wall, you know. This one cabinet, I swear, was over 500 pounds. And we were standing it up we dropped the thing on Gunderson's toe, and I said, "are you hurt" and he says "I thought it was going to chip the cabinet." He just goes "ouch, don't chip the cabinet."

JIM REDLIN: When we got done moving the cabinets around, Andresen got done with that convocation and everything next morning I went up, I had my pickup and asked him where he wanted the files and he said "well, grab a few guys here and there." Must have been about six of

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us and we had a heck of a time getting those things up those stairs. Boy were they heavy. But you didn't realize at the time we had thrown them in the back end of the pickup.

ART DUNN: I knew all the time that somebody was running around, and you are kind of watching things. I saw one thing that happened that if the fire had been going on this probably would have been so funny I would have just laid on the ground and just bawled. A kid came running out of Crabtree Hall (one of the men's housing wings) and slipped. And one of the cooks was standing there, and he slipped and slid clean through her legs while she was standing there. And she just stood there and after the fire was all done, I thought about this.

\_\_\_\_\_: Just like me, when I got up, I just had my pants on and my shirt, and when I seen it was the school. I just put on my shoes, I didn't put on my socks, and I was out for just about two hours with just my shoes on and no socks. And my feet were so cold. And then we went over to the gym to get those uniforms on, and I put on some basketball socks.

DON AUCLAIR: I stayed behind the building keeping an eye so this fire wouldn't spread especially those sparks. The sky was so full of sparks, it just looked like a fourth of July celebration. This was really something fantastic. The thing that I really enjoyed about this school, it shows how great the school is. About nine o'clock or after, everybody was in the coffee shop and the students would smile and tell a joke, you know. And some of them had lost hundreds of dollars of stuff themselves. And they weren't thinking about themselves, they were thinking about the teachers that lost thousands, not hundreds worth of things. And these same teachers were able to smile and keep up the spirit. That is what is so terrific about this school—everybody is able to keep up the spirit.

\_\_\_\_\_: I think it was Mr. Gribble, he was just standing there, and the place was just burning, you know. And he was just kind of smiling. And I asked him, "didn't you lose anything?" And he said "Yes, I lost about \$3,000 worth of stuff." And he just kind of laughed and he says "you know, this is the best thing that ever happened to the community. You will get a new school now, and that is the best thing for the community of Ellendale that we ever had. You know, I got to thinking about that, and if we get a new school that is really going to be something."

\_\_\_\_\_: At one time Mr. Gribble and his wife were just standing there looking at the cafeteria window and while all this fire was going through the history rooms downstairs, and he says, "Yeah, I bet that is a hot subject right about now."

\_\_\_\_\_: Afterwards there was a little party and I believe it was Friday night, and Scott Anderson was there. And Mr. Hobbs has had some different species he has been collecting for eight or nine years. And Scotty was sitting there, and he says, "Say, you know, Dennis, I bet Hobbs had one hell of a death curve on that one."

MRS. YLITALO: I understand they had to restrain him physically to keep him from going in.

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\_\_\_\_\_: I met Mr. Hobbs at the door and he had a microscope or something. You know what a guy doesn't realize when you go in a building and you don't know, what shall we save, you realize in the back of your mind it is going to go.

MRS. YLITALO: None of you guys are John Wilke, are you?

\_\_\_\_\_: He's over there. Mr. Hobbs and the people in a fire like that, they don't think about themselves. He saved his microscope and Kirk Redlin's camera and he had things like his arrowheads and all these collections that are just beautiful and here he grabbed that camera of Kirk's because he was thinking of somebody else. You don't know what to do and what to take first. When we got into Mr. Andresens's office, he ran in there and opened the drawer and grabbed a handful of his pencils and pens and he shoved them in his pocket and he said, "grab those files" and the first thing he did was grab those pens and pencils. He really kept us cool, I think. I would have sat down and cried. I remember on the end of one of these files there were two guys on one end and two janitors on the end with me and one had a pipe in his mouth and he kept hitting his pipe on the edge and knocking his teeth and pretty soon he said "I can't hold it anymore," and he let completely go. And I was trying to hold up the cabinet and not let it go down the steps. Just about that time Doug came, and Doug says, "I could just see that janitor laying on the steps with that file running over the top of his pipe, crumpled." I think the janitors deserve a lot of credit, too.

DOUG CORNELIUS: I know my senate office will be moved to a dorm room in one of the dorms as the social science took the office in the student union and I put a notice right in the post office lobby for complaints and suggestions, primarily complaints. The instructors and administration will have all the troubles of their own these next few days to direct them through the senate and address them to me or the office and it's been there for days and I haven't got any complaints yet. You know there are ten kids who have lost over a thousand dollars worth of personal items that could be writing in saying "where to I fill out my insurance claim for them," you know. But there are no complaints.

\_\_\_\_\_: Sure they are wondering if they can collect insurance but the thing I hear are they going to rebuild a new school or where are they going to hold classes. They were interested but they are more concerned where the classes will be and how the school is going to go and yet they lost this money.

DONA AUCLAIR: I know with all these ashes around it will make my lawn dirty. Someone make the remark that your lawn is dirty, in fact the whole school yard is dirty. I was sitting by the ashes, that is my job, watching. There was some wind blowing up there and there was hot ashes, so it wouldn't start another fire. And I was looking at that building and I said to myself, "just think of all the people who have gone to school in these countries that have war." This looked like a building that had been destroyed by a bomb. And I felt really bad for those students who had neglected their education because of some wars and things.

DOUG CORNELIUS: there's going to be a lot of choices made. A lot of kids could say, "well, why should I put up with the inconvenience? It would be nothing for me to say that I am going to transfer.

\_\_\_\_\_: I think the thing now is after all of this happening and the speech that Mr. Andresen gave and the attitude of some of the other students, they just want to go out and fifth. They just want to see this school go; they have this fight attitude. Go—show the people that we can go. The fight is not against the establishment but for and don't forget that the old goats—anyone over 32—are going to be fighting too.

DOUG CORNELIUS: For example, in my own case I had to choose like this basketball team has this road trip to Montana right now and they won't be home until Wednesday. I just wouldn't have the heart to leave with the ball team, so I had to drop the team. I dropped off the team because OI have to stay here and work for the people.

DENNIS DAHL: It was shortly after the fire, I went back to the dorm about 9:30, and I was cold and wet and a lot of other people were too and disgusted in a way at what happened and het hoping there would be a chance. There was one fellow came down and packed his bags and was ready to go and there was just a few people with the attitude he had. But I was sorry later that I did cut up, but he made the statement, "well it's all done now so no sense in me hanging around this hole." And I just ripped into him and told myself when I took the job I wasn't going to blow up, because that wouldn't do any good. And there were a few people standing around and they were 100 percent behind what I said to him. After a while I think he really felt rotten about what he had said, and what he had thought, because it was just completely "I'm getting out now and you don't have anything for me." I took advantage of what I could in Ellendale and a few of these people stayed and talked to him after I left and after awhile he talked to me about it and I apologized to him for cutting up. There were a lot of things on my mind, just like the rest of the folks sitting there, and his attitude was completely indifferent. I've never heard anyone else say, and even his opinion has changed some, and the student body got together after Mr. Andresens' speech which hit a lot of people.

MRS. YLITALO: That must have been wonderful.

\_\_\_\_\_: The question was out of where are we going to hold classes. Then a member of the student senate suggested we copy our where they are going to be held, and under what instructor, and I went back and laid down in the afternoon at about 2 o'clock to get some sleep. And about 3:30 Mr. Newman came into my room, and he already had where the classes were going to be held and everything. I think the faculty really deserves a lot of the credit right there. We lost a couple of buildings, but we didn't lose the school. As long as we have teachers and students, we have a college and I am sure we have both right here.

\_\_\_\_\_: I thought one other thing that was really great was that these other college like NDSU that we hardly really hear of, you know, they gained a lot of respect from it. Like NDSU said any supplies you need, anything you need, we are willing to give. At the NDSA convention Grand Forks is always fighting NDSU and we are Grand Forks' little brother, and must stick with them, and NDSU gets up and says something and we tell them to sit down because you are inferior to the superior UND and their student body president called me yesterday and said "any help you need, you know we will help." Some students brought their own typewriters so they

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could use them until the school could get some new typewriters. Now that is what is so wonderful about this whole thing.

MRS. YLITALO: Now my idea on this is not for my own personal benefit. It's just that I can do something to help and I was just wondering if contacting a news story like *Life* magazine, they could tell this story and maybe bring this recording to them and I have pictures something and they could send it back. They could interview just about anyone on campus. No, I just thought about it when I started with the idea. It's something I might be able to write and get published. I just had a few articles published. I don't do too much writing. Well, I get both *Life* and *Look* and they both go for the human interest and I think this is pretty good human interest myself. I just wondered what you guys would think of this. I'll call them when I get back to the office.

ART DUNN: I had a wrestling tournament yesterday and I hadn't slept for 24 hours before that and when I got to that tournament I figured, "gee whiz, you know and I wouldn't be able to do anything. And it really shocked me to see the attitudes of, you know, there were eight schools there. They were really for us they were really standing behind us. The kids that I talked to had heard about the fire, they really kind of felt for us.

\_\_\_\_\_: We were down in Aberdeen yesterday too and we were in a group and they would say, "well where are you from and we would say "Ellendale." They said what are they going to do up there now? They didn't feel like well that's so much for that place now maybe we can take over. But they said, well . . . .

MRS. YLITALO: Well, if we could get some national coverage on this so many alumni would know about it instantly, sure they know about the fire but do they realize what a wonderful job you guys did and they better pitching and help too.

JIM REDLIN: I think anyone who thought anything about the school—many a time I've cut down the school myself. I know that I've been disgusted with the school. And really the thing that is hard for myself with this college is, I like the college and it's a wonderful place and that. But probably like yourself, when you went here you lived at home and you were off campus and you had been at home now for 20 years and you are still home with Mommy and Daddy and you kind of want to get away. You know the reasons. I went here for two years, you know. All my brothers and sister and relatives, none of them have gone here, except Kirk is going here too. Like I told him last spring, you can't beat the place and you are not going to get anything [better] any place else—it's a good school as far as I am concerned.

DON AUCLAIR: I still pray for the right support and make it back into a four-year school. That would be the best thing that could happen to this college because like Friday I was downtown and I was talking. I work down there after school and everybody I came in contact with says, "will you be going back to a four-year school? There is nothing better they could do for this school." There are plenty of two-year schools around and not many four-year.

\_\_\_\_\_: I think the value of the school was shown by Governor Guy and George Sinner from the Board of Higher Education were here just like that about six hours after the fire started.

MRS. YLITALO: There is quite a story that I heard about that too. Now tell me a little about this group called the Three Stones.

\_\_\_\_\_: One of the Three Stones came over and one of them was whipping out the door with an instrument under his arm and he bumped into a guy who was standing there and he turned around to say excuse me and he turned around and he says "Oh, my God, Governor Guy." I don't know who it was, but Mr. Andresen would know because he was with Governor Guy. They did this to get the morale up for the kids and it helped to carry on you know. I lost my trumpet in the fire but we managed to scrap another one up and we got together in the old armory. And we had a jam session, and some of the kids came over and played a little basketball and raised some noise and let them know we were still around.

\_\_\_\_\_: The dance that night was very successful, too. We had one of the fraternities keep it going from ten to two. Earlier they said, "what are we coping to do about the dance, and they said I really don't know yet, so we were just kind of sitting around and the Dean came in and gave that speech. And he said "I hear there is a dance. If the armory isn't open we will have it in the fieldhouse. We are still going to have the dance—good deal—it a real successful dance, I think. It was one of the better ones we have had here. Well, working as a policeman here in town, I had to check the place out. This was a terrific group. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. Not that the fire affected them in any way but showed they had good spirits, and I felt that everything is going to turn out right at the school. Just the way everyone behaved at that dance. I think the fraternities should have a pat on the back in view of everything that happened. It was kind of like the atmosphere you were in, you know, before we went into the dance you had to got by the college and all the rubble. It kind of struck you and then you got in the dance and heard the music and saw the kids laughing, then you know of got away from it and laughing and having a good time, and you forgot it to some extent and then you felt good again and then of course you had to walk outside and \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_: One night just after the fire there was a group of people sitting around, and somebody made the remark, "rules are too strict in the dorm" and they said well we should be able to drink in the dorm and someone says if they won't let us drink in the dorm we will burn that down too. Everything was in hyst, at least they can laugh about it. An announcer from KSJB called down and Roerich talked to him and he said "I hear you had a little fire down there. It got a little hot and Roerich says, well, we got a little hot too but we are really going to fire up tonight."